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Inside APHIS

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Programs Explore Collaboration to Help Achieve the Vision



Managers considering how to collaborate in program delivery are (clockwise around the table) Don Luchsinger, VS deputy administrator; Charles Schwalbe, PPQ Northeastern regional director; Ron Caffey, PPQ veterinary medical officer; and, Bob Strong, PPQ Southeastern regional director.

APHIS photo by Laurie Smith

This past September, the management teams of each program-delivery unit met as a group for a day and a half in Riverdale, MD. This conference marked the first time program unit heads had come together to consider how they might collaborate on program delivery. Bobby Acord, ADC's deputy administrator, proposed the meeting, and it was put together by a design team consisting of Will Hueston (VS), Chuck Schwalbe (PPQ), Cindy Smith (ADC), Mary Neal (IS), Val Colleton (REAC), Mike Lidsky (BBEP), Rob Werge and Yolanda Hunt (PPD).

"After last summer's strategies conference, we in ADC asked ourselves what contributions we could make toward helping the

agency accomplish its new vision, including becoming one APHIS," explains Smith, assistant deputy administrator for ADC. "ADC wanted to take the lead in convening agency leadership to focus on working across unit lines to meet the needs of our customers. The objective of the conference, then, was to get people to meet and work together on practical, field-based problems we all face."

The program contained formal presentations by Administrator Lonnie King, Associate Administrator Terry Medley, and Kevin Shea, director of M&B's Budget and Accounting Division. Participatory activities included an open "town

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meeting," a panel on collocation and resource sharing, a set of workshops on collaborative program design, and small group discussions.

In his opening talk, King cited six factors affecting the future of APHIS—factors that are forcing us to change and to adapt if we are to survive: reform in the role and size of Government, the budget deficit, the productivity deficit, the restructuring and globalization of agriculture, a relative decline in the political influence of the agricultural sector, and rapid change in science and technology.

What is One APHIS?

King also explained to managers in the combined program and service units (80 to 100 people) his concept of "one APHIS." Employees in "one APHIS" will share expertise across unit lines yet maintain unit identity. They will share resources, consolidate support services, standardize systems and processes, share leadership, find partners and teams across unit lines, adopt and align with the APHIS vision, and gain strength through their diversity of perspectives and skills.

"Lonnie's speech was inspirational and challenging," says Will Hueston, VS design team member and acting director of Operational Support. "But immediately afterward, he had to leave to attend other commitments. Some people are calling me the 'Sally Jesse Raphael' of APHIS because of town meetings I have held in various places. At the conference, we opened up the floor for a town-meeting discussion on Lonnie's speech.

A Town Meeting

"It was a dynamic interchange of ideas," Hueston continues. "King himself quoted Alfred North Whitehead, who observed, 'We think in generalities, but we work in details.' APHIS managers had many questions, and the AMT stepped in for Lonnie to answer questions and fill in the details. They were responding for Lonnie as a unified group—as 'one APHIS'.

"For example," Hueston adds, "One of the questions had to do with the agency's downsizing efforts. The questioner wanted to know how getting rid of employees

fits with the caring described in the APHIS vision. As I recall, two AMT members, Terry Medley and Don Husnik answered. Their response was that we have the chance to determine how we will downsize—we have a chance to reinvent the future."

"As we move toward the 21st century, collaboration in program delivery is a key APHIS strategy."

—Rob Werge

During the second day, each unit gave a short overview of their program and shared their strengths, their needs, and their future direction with the group. "I was really impressed by their honesty and candid self-assessment," recalls Smith, "as well as the tremendous resources available within APHIS. "Our program leaders were all very open about what resources they needed and what they had to share. I believe sharing that information alone made the conference worthwhile."

Sharing Resources

Louise Lothery, VS' resource management director, was on the panel discussing co-location and resource sharing. "The Centers for Epidemiology and Animal Health is one example of successful resource sharing," says Lothery. "As the primary organization at this Ft. Collins, CO, location, we provide space, secretarial support, and administrative support to several R&D, PPQ, and ADC employees. We also share space and resources with other programs at several other field locations. I left the conference feeling good," Lothery adds. "I came back and started

talking to regional administrative officers about some of the ideas I heard there."

Examples of other resource-sharing surfaced as well. Participants shared lessons they had learned from previous collaborative efforts, including the integration of VS and PPQ, the use of rotational assignments for IS foreign service employees, and inter-unit coordination on the Mediterranean fruit fly program in California, rabies in Texas, and trade negotiations with Mexico and Japan.

"These cases were supplemented by many others that emerged from the discussion groups," adds Werge, "such as BBEP and PPQ collaboration on biological testing, joint planning for handling the Olympics this coming summer in Georgia, and the informal sharing of resources in the field. As we move toward the 21st century," summarizes Werge, "collaboration in program delivery is a key APHIS strategy."

"We wanted to support the programs in their efforts to collaborate with each other," says Smith. Options to continue the work begun at this conference include yearly meetings like this, scheduling management team meetings at the same time and place, and inviting representatives from other units to attend management team meetings. ♦

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Director:
Patrick Collins
Managing Editor:
Rick McNaney
Editor/Designer
Mary Yurkovich
Photography Editor
Laurie Smith

A Piece of Cake, Yes, But Also an Event With a Serious Side

Music, singing, laughter, and applause filled the auditorium at Riverdale, MD, on September 13 where employees gathered to dedicate the new USDA Center at Riverside. After occupying the building for about 8 months, employees witnessing the official ribbon cutting could now call the building their home.

Alex Thiermann, deputy administrator of IS, added humor to his role of master of ceremonies, setting the tone for light-heartedness and fun. More laughter came as Associate Administrator Terry Medley narrated a slide show contrasting conditions at the old Federal Building with the spacious amenities of the new building.

APHIS Management Team members seemed in high spirits. They successfully competed with such show-stealers as the Sunny Days Early Learning Center toddlers who enchanted the audience with two songs and the catchy rhythms of the jazz band and choir from two local schools, who, as participants of the APHIS adopt-a-school program, were there as part of the APHIS family.

Nevertheless, there were serious moments as well. Administrator Lonnie King pointed out the appropriateness of embarking on a new vision of a team-based organization in a building whose conference rooms, meeting rooms, and 572 miles of state-of-the-art cables encourage partnering and networking with customers and each other.

In dedicating a plaque to employees who died in the line of duty, King said, "An organization can only move forward by honoring the past and using the many contributions of others as a source or renewal and inspiration."

Some employees from the past who attended and spoke at the dedication were former administrators Frank Mulhern, Harry Mussman, and Jim Glosser. Angie Melland spoke for her husband, former Administrator Bob Melland, who initiated the move to the new building over 4 years ago. "The new building was part of Bob's vision," Melland said.



APHIS PHOTO BY LAURIE SMITH

Besides cutting the ceremonial ribbon, Administrator Lonnie King here prepares to cut into a replica of the Riverdale building on a cake. Cakes were available in employee lounges on each floor in honor of the event.

Assistant Secretary Pat Jensen used the occasion to say good bye to APHIS and to introduce her replacement Michael Dunn. "Today is the ending of a wonderful period in my life," Jensen commented.

Jensen also congratulated the Headquarters Relocation Project Office (HRPO) staff who engineered and orchestrated the move. "I have been told you moved 1175 employees and over 15,000 boxes while incurring only \$1,500 in damages," Jensen commented. "With that track record, I would like to ask if you are available to move me back to Minnesota!"

At the ceremony, the following HRPO employees received certificates and paperweights: Joe Frick, April Brewington, Bart Brown, Fred Geary, Karen Kallenmeyer, Shirley LaCovey, Jerry Mainer, Michael Marquis, Pat McQuillan, Dana Mingo, Doris Palusky, Victor Ponte, Mary Rhodes, Robert Rice, Eugene Skinner, Billy Smith, and Laura Young.

A surprise twist came from Ann Ferguson, Mayor of Riverdale. After congratulating the group on the dedication and welcoming

employees to the town, she related some little-known history: A mile away stands Riversdale, an 1801 historic site and home originally of the Calvert family. Charles Bennet of the Calvert family was passionately interested in agriculture. He became principal founder of the Maryland Agricultural College, which became the University of Maryland. As "Mr. Agriculture," Bennet also promoted a federal agricultural department in Congress and succeeded in creating a Bureau of Agriculture, the predecessor of the Department, in 1862.

"I find it a unique coincidence that USDA has moved here, to the same town where the man who began it all lived and breathed," Ferguson said. Ferguson presented King with a written copy of her research, and it is now available in the building's Information Center. ♦

Volunteer Producers Join Project to Enhance Pork Markets

The United States is producer of the lowest cost pork in the world. Yet, international sales of U.S. fresh pork lag behind other countries. A VS initiative—the National Trichinae Research Project—is directed at helping U.S. pork become competitive in European markets and in markets throughout the world.

Since last January, VS offices covering New England, New Jersey, and Ohio, have been participating in a cooperative effort to evaluate the effectiveness of a test for trichinosis and to verify the factors that put swine herds at risk for the disease. Organizations participating in the project are APHIS, the Agricultural Research Service (ARS), the Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS), the National Pork Producers Council (NPPC), and pork producers in seven States who have volunteered to participate in the project.

"Eliminating trichinae from swine is important," says VS' Larry Miller, who ensures APHIS coordination with the multi-group effort from the National Animal Health program staff in Riverdale, MD. "But we hope that the project will do much more. We see this as an effort to remove barriers that prevent the industry from becoming competitive in markets overseas."

Diversity of Perspectives

"Each cooperator brings an invaluable and different perspective to the project," continues Miller. "In APHIS, our field employees are providing epidemiology and testing. ARS scientists developed the test for trichinosis and are testing filed samples and verifying infections. FSIS, with its newly acquired responsibility for animal-production food safety, wants to learn what activities at the farm level will increase the safety of food. The NPPC hopes that by removing trichinosis as a trade barrier, the industry can reach its full economic potential.

"FSIS is contributing funding to this study because our strategy is to build coalitions and partner-

ships to develop food safety risk-reduction strategies from farm to table," says Bonnie Buntain, formerly of APHIS and now director of the Animal Production Food Safety Program in FSIS.

"Each cooperator brings an invaluable and different perspective to the project."

—Larry Miller

The NPPC also recognizes the value of such a partnership. "We have worked successfully with APHIS in the past," says Beth Lautner, vice president for swine health and pork safety of the NPPC, "in the elimination of other swine diseases. We are glad to have your expertise in epidemiology to help us accomplish our national goals. "Trichinosis is a trade barrier to exporting our products to the European Union. Eliminating the threat of this parasite could have a profound impact on U.S. pork sales abroad."

What is Trichinosis?

Trichinosis is a zoonotic disease; that is, the disease is transmissible from animals to humans. It is caused by small parasitic worms called trichinae. They do not produce illness in swine, but if humans eat fresh, raw or undercooked pork, they get the disease. Mild infections may go unnoticed or cause some flu-like symptoms; severe infections can result in death, although less than 2 percent of all reported cases are fatal. Known human cases in the United States occurred at a rate of over 400 per year in the first half of this century but have declined to 29 last year.

In Western Europe, every hog slaughtered is inspected to ensure these carcasses have no trichinae. In the United States, where inspecting every carcass is impractical, Americans have learned to freeze or cook their pork well to kill any trichinae. The National Trichinae Research Project hopes to find an alternative to overcooking or inspecting every carcass to make pork even safer than it is now.

The incidence of the disease in swine has declined from greater than 1 percent to an estimated 0.1 percent in 1970, according to ARS parasitologist Ray Gamble, who developed the test being used in the Project. Gamble recalls that slaughterhouse testing in the 1980's showed that the prevalence rates could be much higher—.50 and .75 percent in New Jersey and New England—and lower—almost 0 in the Midwest.

Design of the Project

"We believe we know the critical control points for preventing trichinosis at the farm level," says Miller. "They are rodents, wildlife, and cannibalism. We will be looking at these control points on the farms of volunteer producers."

"For this project, we decided to test three types of herds in New England and New Jersey," says Bob Teclaw of Thorntown, IN, who is the regional epidemiologist assigned to the project. "We wanted 30 regulated waste feeders (herds that eat plate waste), 30 nonregulated waste feeders (herds that eat bakery waste and candy, for example), and 30 grain feeders. Currently, we are running this test on 90 herds in New England and 90 herds in New Jersey, and we expect to finish by the end of the year."

Work With Producers

"The veterinary medical officers and the animal identification coordinator are working closely with the producers here in New Jersey to do the initial testing," says Linda Detwiler, area veterinarian-in-charge (AVIC), "and they



APHIS PHOTO BY PHYLLIS RAYCA

APHIS Veterinary Medical Officer Cheryl Berthoud (center) bleeds a pig held by the farm manager and an employee at the New Jersey State Hospital at Greystone, NJ. The Department of Corrections' farm located on the hospital grounds is participating in the Trichinae Research Project.

will follow up on any suspect animals. Also, they will be trapping rodents to determine if they are carrying the disease. The State has given us a lot of help," adds Detwiler. Two State animal health technicians are assisting with the testing."

ADC Role

William Smith, AVIC for New England, agrees that rodents probably play a significant role in the transmission of the disease and that certain management characteristics may increase or decrease the chances of getting trichinae in herds.

"In New England," Smith says, "we are buying serologically positive animals from the herd

owner, euthanizing them, and collecting tissues to determine the parasitic burden in these animals. ADC State Director Laura Henze is helping us with a corollary rodent trapping program. ARS will be sampling the rodents to determine if they have trichinae.

"I think the project is going to dispel a lot of rumors," adds Smith. "I predict we'll find the incidence in pigs is lower than we thought."

Testing the Test

In Ohio, the objective of the project is to verify if a commercial version of the ELISA test can supplement the laboratory test developed by ARS' Gamble. Gamble's blood test can detect trichinae-infected pigs with a better than 90 percent accuracy.

"The State is providing a lot of resources for this part of the project," says AVIC John Clifford.

"For 12 months, we're collecting blood samples from 20,000 sows and boars at slaughterhouses. The Ohio Department of Agriculture's diagnostic laboratory administers the commercial ELISA test. Soon we will bring West Virginia into the project, but the work in West Virginia will be similar to that of the Eastern program."

"The commercial version of the ELISA test has been modified to take 20 minutes instead of 3 hours, explains Gamble, "and people can do the test with drop-per bottles and read the results in the field. In the final step of the test, a color change from clear to dark blue indicates that the animal is infected."

Recommendations

The data from the field studies won't be available until early next year, according to Miller, and the group has agreed not to release preliminary results. However, at its September meeting, Project members developed several recommendations about how the National Trichinae Research Project should proceed. The major recommendations are to conduct a national prevalence study and monitor at-risk populations, to make sure of the risk factors, and to develop a mechanism for certifying a herd as trichinae safe.

"The most exciting possibility for FSIS is that the project could well become a model for how management practices can reduce the risk of human pathogens in food," says Buntain. We will be analyzing the data to learn if the ELISA test is an accurate and cost-effective way of predicting risks to public health, and how a process for herd certification might help promote public health. If the model process works for trichinosis, some day it might be applied to other food-borne pathogens, such as E.coli 0157:H7 and Salmonella." ♦

Trail Boss Official Signs Computer Contract With IBM

Offices purchasing computer systems this fiscal year will be buying them and a host of accompanying services from IBM Government Systems—the vendor awarded the contract through the Integrated Systems Acquisition Project (ISAP). Deputy Trail Boss Maureen McKee and an IBM contracting official signed the contract at a ceremony held in Riverdale, MD, on September 6.

"It's an event we have been working toward since the establishment of the Trail Boss office (OTB) in APHIS 3 years ago," says Trail Boss Bill Cosgrove. "This contract gives the agency a strategic framework for the next generation of information technology. Also, it is the first fully successful USDA procurement effort using the Trail Boss program—a system recommended by the General Services Administration for large integrated system procurements," says Cosgrove.

Five vendors competed for the \$250 million contract, which covers 1 base year and can be renewed every year for 9 years. Other Government agencies have an opportunity to purchase systems under the contract as well. The IBM solution will support more than 5,700 users at 1,200 sites worldwide and make available to employees information and processing resources covering requirements from basic local office automation to advanced agencywide applications.

The Applications

IBM's solution uses a Unix operating system, one popular in academic circles and the basis for Internet. This system will replace the DOS systems used in most offices. Together with its teaming partners (over 40 other contractors), IBM will provide an integrated client-server system comprised of RISC System/6000 servers and workstations, ThinkPad portables, X-terminals, office automation software, and various other applications.

Agencywide data and information sharing will happen through



APHIS PHOTO BY THAY LY

Contracting Officer Maureen McKee signs the ISAP contract in the Trail Boss office in late August. A formal signing ceremony followed a week later in Riverdale, MD, with IBM and other agency officials attending.

communications products supporting GOSIP, TCP/IP, SNA and BSC protocols. In addition to providing hardware and software, IBM also will provide us various services, including a user help desk, a network control center, engineering support, training, and hardware and software maintenance.

"Users don't need to know Unix to operate the system," explains McKee. "It has a graphical user interface that allows users to perform the same functions they are performing on their present equipment. It uses different software packages, but users can convert their old packages to the new packages."

Conversion of Offices

ITS is responsible for converting offices to the contract as offices have the funds to replace their current equipment. Last month, ITS managers began meeting to develop plans for the conversion. OTB employees responsible for awarding the contract are based at two locations—Riverdale, MD, and

Ft. Collins, CO. These contract specialists, computer specialists, and cost analysts came from from M&B, VS, and PPQ programs. At Riverdale are Maureen McKee (deputy director for acquisition), Jim Gannon, Angela Thompson, Lynn Kent, Greg Gage (deputy director for implementation), Doug Biederman, Matt McLean, Ron Thorwart, Fred Goings, Thay Ly, Trish Anelli, Nora Rice, and two contract employees from Synergistics. At Ft. Collins are Walt Moczydlowsky (deputy director for the live test demonstration), Norm Merritt, Blaine Crussell, and five contract employees from Kuo and Associates. John Thelke was at Ft. Collins until his retirement last year. This pool of OTB employees worked on three teams: a cost and business team, a validation/evaluation team, and a live test demonstration team. Composition of the teams varied from task to task, according to the requirements of the process.

Out of the Closet

"It's good to finally come out of the closet," says Gage, who, with other OTB employees, operated under tight security during the long process of selecting a vendor. Moczydlowsky agrees. The Ft. Collins team moved from behind the locked doors of their special project office at the end of September to return to their VS offices on South Howes Street.

"Some parts of the process were not fun," recalls Gage. "Participating vendors filed protests during June, July, and September last year. They were trying to recoup their costs, and we had to respond to each of the three protests on a tight schedule. We had to prove we were abiding by the process and did not restrict competition."

"If we had lost these protests, it could have set us back 6 months in our schedule, and the Government could have lost millions of dollars," McKee says. "Lynn Flanagan of the Office of General Counsel helped us prepare for and win each protest."

"It was like studying for an exam in school. We crammed for long hours at the South Building in Washington, DC, preparing for depositions, and we got great support from the technical teams," adds McKee. "The pizza delivery employees knew exactly where to deliver when we'd send out for pizza. We'd call in and they'd say, 'Oh, yes. Wing four. We'll have it there in exactly 20 minutes.'"

"It was tight making the deadlines," says Gage. "We had to put together a defense of technical and legal issues. One of the protests generated a response of 33 volumes. We had to get copies to each lawyer by the deadline. But with everyone pitching in, we made the deadlines, and we presented a solid defense. The judge decided in our favor each time."

Live Test Demonstration

The last step in OTB's validation process was the live test demonstration (LTD). In an LTD, Vendors must demonstrate that they can execute a series of scripts within a certain prescribed time limit. The test takes a week to complete. Moczydlowsky was the mastermind behind the LTD developed by the Ft. Collins team in 1992. This LTD was included in the vendors' solicitation packets.

"We developed 13 different scripts describing end-user tasks," explains Moczydlowsky. "We had scripts for office automation, four different data base applications, program development, and system administration. Some of the scripts used a combination of all of these. We also had scripts that used multiple servers, four different server sizes, and scripts that tested connectivity. For example, one script required that a certain query to the data base should produce the data in no more than 4 seconds."

"The LTD process was emotional and exciting," says Gage. For the IBM LTD at Boulder, CO, we started every day at 7 a.m. and ended at 10 p.m. Because both staffs were working long hours, we agreed to split the cost of meals and have them brought to us. On the IBM staff were many vegetarians, so the food was vegetarian. After 3 days with no meat, I began looking hungrily at some rabbits who lived in the courtyard of the IBM complex."

"What impressed me most about the demonstration," Moczydlowsky recalls, "was the outstanding job our team did even though the experience was new for some team members. In an LTD, you can't change the ground rules, you can't

be flexible; you can't cut corners. You have to make sure everything is legal as well as technically right. Our team did an outstanding job."

IBM Passes

So did IBM. It passed every test within the prescribed time limits. The last competitor withdrew its bid the day before their LTD was to have started. OTB members participating in the test already had their bags packed. "We had discovered a potential problem," recalls Moczydlowsky, "and pointed it out to them. At that stage, they dropped out." IBM was then the lone bidder for an APHIS system. OTB employees knew they had a contract for APHIS.

All that remained was the price negotiation. "We pointed out the strengths and weaknesses of their proposal and tied weaknesses to costs," explains McKee. "This negotiation lasted for a week and a half. Then we asked for their best and final offer. After more intense analysis, we reached a resolution."

"A team effort such as ISAP does not come easy," comments Cosgrove. "We're proud of the successful outcome of this negotiation phase and look forward to the challenge of implementing the new one-APHIS system." ♦



Consulting their scripts during the live test demonstration at the IBM facility in Boulder, CO, are (from left) Greg Gage, Matt McLean, who wears a stop watch used to time the responses of the many processes IBM was required to demonstrate, and Walt Moczydlowsky.

Photo courtesy of IBM

Medfly, Recruitment, and Grasshoppers Fetch Honor Awards

Secretary Glickman presented this year's Departmental Honor Awards in a ceremony in Washington, DC, following a state-of-the-Department address on September 20, 1995. Three APHIS groups were among the award recipients; in addition, two employees were honored as part of an Agricultural Research Service (ARS) team receiving an honor award.

New Strain of Medfly

In the IS cooperative program to eradicate Mediterranean fruit fly (Medfly), four APHIS employees and one ARS employee were recognized for developing the technology for large-scale deployment of a temperature-sensitive lethal strain of Medfly.

Receiving an honor award were IS employees Alan Green (team leader), Gordon Tween, and Pedro Rendon, and PPQ entomologist David Lance.

Formerly in the Medfly program in Guatemala, both males and females were sterilized and released over areas where wild Medflies were thriving. In the award-winning strain, females have a genetic defect that makes them die at temperatures above 30 degrees. In the absence of sterile females, the sterile males seek out wild female Medflies more aggressively. Eliminating the females also allows greater overflooding of the wild population and eliminates damage to fruit by oviposition of the sterile females.

Rearing of sterile insects is the most costly part of sterile release programs. By eliminating the females, these employees have reduced rearing costs by an estimated 30 percent. Use of the new strain gives APHIS the potential for eradicating Medfly without the use of pesticides and enhances our ability to incorporate parasites and other biological methods of control into the total Medfly strategy.

Intern Recruitment

Three R&D employees and five employees in M&B's Human Resources Operations (HRO) received an honor award for actively marketing, recruiting, and filling summer intern positions in APHIS and in the two other agencies in Marketing and Regulatory Programs. The award went to

team leader Carolyn Gethers, Karen Lowe, and Tina Winestock of R&D; and to Martha Gravagna, Lynn Goodman, Kristen Luurs, Kathy Slaga, and Nancy Varichak of HRO.

To attract more minorities and outstanding students to careers in MRP, Gethers and her group first established a network of contacts within the Historically Black Colleges and Universities. Then, moving to advance diversity, the group broadened its efforts to over 600 colleges, universities, and organizations representing the Hispanic association of Colleges and Universities, American Indian Tribal Schools, and colleges and universities with significant enrollments of women, Asian-Pacific Islanders, and persons with disabilities.

Beginning with APHIS, the group later expanded to serve the two other MRP agencies—the Agricultural Marketing Service and the Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration. Beginning with 7 interns in 1989, the group increased its recruitment to 78 interns in 1994; from an applicant pool of 150, the group increased its pool to about 3,000 applicants. This group has changed the traditional way in which the Department has recruited students for summer employment.

"It is possible that this is the first time that any Federal Government Department has made such a comprehensive, concerted, and successful national effort to attract and employ minority students," says group leader Gethers.

Grasshopper Management

Controlling large-scale grasshopper outbreaks on Western rangeland has, in the past, necessitated blanketing large areas with pesticides. When the Integrated Pest Management (IPM) project was organized, it was charged with developing new IPM products and procedures for controlling rangeland grasshoppers. A PPQ team, including an ARS employee, has received an honor award for developing new management strategies and products for grasshopper control. APHIS employees receiving the award are project leader Gary Cunningham, Bob

Brittingham, Stephen Knight, Nelson Foster, Loren Winks, Helene Wright, Diane Dillingham, and Mike Sampson.

Nine Federal agencies and over 50 scientists from Federal and State research institutions were involved in the research and development program. Scientific disciplines ranged from plant pathology to rangeland management and from economics to environmental evaluation. Field operations and testing went on at two 1-million-acre sites, one in North Dakota and one in Idaho.

The team made sure that by project's end, products and technology were available for transfer to ranching communities and land-managing entities. Products include Hopper, a management software system; a User Handbook, a Field Guide to Common Western Grasshoppers, and a registered biological control agent, *Beauveria bassiana*. Technology transfer teams for these products worked with end users to assure implementation.

The project director, along with members of the team, assured that the project developed comprehensive technology transfer plans and that the plans were followed. As a result, all major functions were finished by the end of the project, and a mechanism now exists—a new National Grasshopper Management Board—to maintain IPM Project initiatives.

Whitefly Management

Two employees participated in an ARS working group that received an honor award for developing and implementing a comprehensive, scientifically sound plan for sweetpotato whitefly management. PPQ's Dale Meyerdirk and NBCI's Norm Leppla received an honor award for their contributions to this ARS project. In a consortium-type effort, the group produced a 5-year research and action plan for management and control technology of the pest in less than 5 months. The plan is the basic mechanism guiding cooperative, unified efforts to control the sweetpotato white fly, the single most damaging insect pest in the United States since 1991. ♦

Bird Strike Committee Studies Collisions With Wildlife

By Stuart McDonald, Public Affairs, LPA



APHIS PHOTO BY STUART MCDONALD

ADC's James E. Forbes, Chair of Bird Strike Committee USA, stands next to a propane cannon used at Dallas/Ft. Worth (DFW) Airport to frighten birds from active runways.



APHIS PHOTO BY STUART MCDONALD

Over 100 civilians, military biologists, engineers, and airport personnel from North America and Europe gathered at the Dallas-Fort Worth International Airport this past August for the 5th Annual Meeting of Bird Strike Committee USA. These experts met to discuss means of reducing the hazards to aviation by wildlife. Collisions with wildlife, particularly collisions between birds and aircraft, jeopardize human lives and cost the air transport industry and the military hundreds of millions of dollars each year.

Bird Strike Committee USA is an organization sponsored by the Departments of Agriculture, Defense, and Transportation. The Dallas, TX, meeting was coordinated by ADC's Jim Forbes, chair of the committee. The deputy director of U.S. Air Force Flight Safety gave the keynote address on economic, safety, and military issues related to bird strikes.

Technical presentations at the conference included papers on bird strike statistics, engine testing standards for bird strikes, habitat management programs at airports, landfills as bird attractants, and new wildlife management techniques.

In addition to the scientific program, the agenda included panel discussions, airport field trips, and training sessions. Ten exhibitors from the United States and Canada displayed and demonstrated various devices and techniques for separating wildlife from aircraft at airports to make air travel safer and more economical.

For example, plastic runners covered with spikey protrusions make it impossible for birds to land. These runners could be put on buildings and on underpasses to prevent birds from nesting or landing in areas where they pose a threat to aviation. Frightening devices, like propane cannons, scary eye balloons, and cracker shells will also keep birds away. ♦

Members of the Bird Strike Committee USA inspect the American Airline Maintenance Facility at the DFW International Airport.

Improve Line Solicits Customer Feedback for Better Service

By Janis K. C. Jarvis, M&B

Can you envision a better M&B? Tell it to the Improve Line! M&B's customer-focus action team opened its Improve Line on October 1, 1995. Last spring many of the folks in M&B met with some of our customers to determine the areas in which we needed to strengthen our services. We learned quite a bit from those sessions and would like to continue to hear from our customers. So we established the Improve Line to make it easy for our customers to tell us about problem situations and the specific actions they think we should take to improve our service. We welcome recommendations from all of those we serve, including those who already work for M&B. We continue to invite everyone to take a look at M&B and let us know what you think.

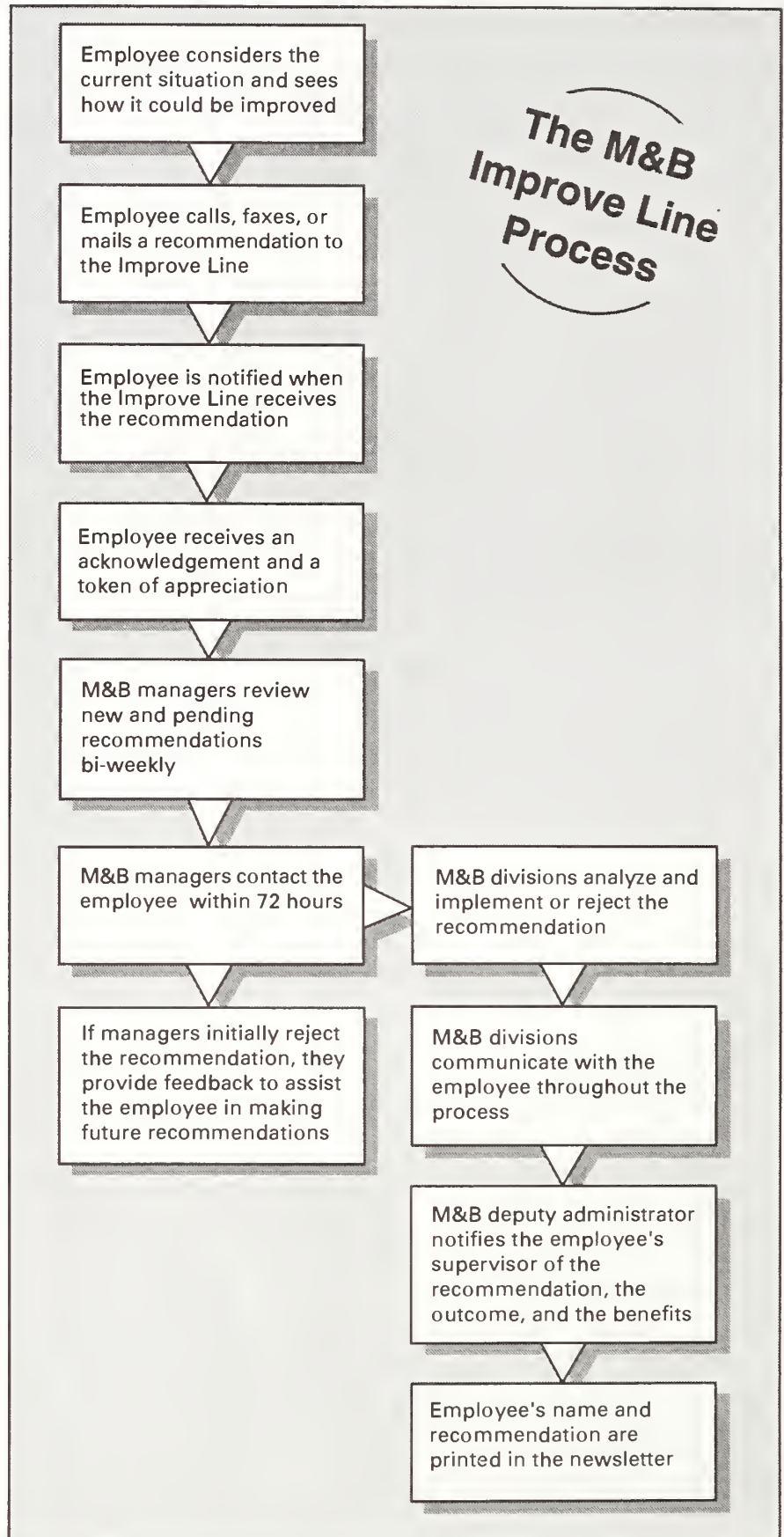
We designed the Improve Line to provide an easily accessible way for customers to communicate their concerns and to recommend solutions. To help us provide quick feedback, we have asked that customers provide the following basic demographic and explanatory information:

- Agency, division, program
- Full name
- Address (including city, State, and zip code)
- Telephone and fax numbers
- Current situation (the problem)
- Recommendation
- Expected benefits (the solution)

Although the Improve program is primarily a hotline, the program also accepts recommendations submitted through electronic mail, facsimiles and regular mail. A form is available that provides an easy-to-follow outline designed to assist customers to organize their thoughts. The form may be obtained by calling me at (301) 734-8789.

To reach the Improve Line directly, customers may call 1-800-332-8033, or (301) 734-8250. After dialing the number, they have the option of leaving a message on voice mail, or speaking with me every weekday from 9-11 A.M. and on Tuesday through Friday, from 2-4 P.M. We have

(See *IMPROVE* on page 14)



Keeping Up With Changes in the Thrift Savings Plan

By Nancy Varichak and Dan Murphy, Human Resources Operations, M&B

The recently passed Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (Public Law 103-353) allows employees to make up any Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) contributions that were not made to their TSP accounts because they were separated or on leave without pay to perform military service. This past June, a letter informing employees of their eligibility to elect retroactive TSP contributions for the entire period missed was sent to all employees whose records indicated that they met the above criteria. Employees who were discharged from the military service on or after August 2, 1990, and believe they are eligible for restoration or reemployment under Chapter 43 of Title 38, U.S.C., but who did not receive the above notification should contact their servicing personnel office (SPO) to verify eligibility.

New form TSP-3

A new form, Thrift Savings Plan Designation of Beneficiary (TSP-3), was revised 11/94 and has replaced previous editions, which are now obsolete. Employees needing to designate a beneficiary should complete this form and submit it directly to the TSP Service Office in New Orleans, LA, (the address is on the back of the form) rather than to their SPO. TSP-3 forms that are already in employees' personnel folders are still valid, and Human Resources Operations employees are forwarding them to the TSP Service Office.

TSP Interfund Transfers

Because of a recent change in regulations, TSP participants may now make 12 interfund transfers (one per month) in a calendar year. To make an interfund transfer, submit a TSP Interfund Transfer

Request form (TSP-30) to the TSP Service Office or telephone the TSP Thrift Line at (504) 255-8777.

TSP participants who have at any time in the past invested a portion of their TSP accounts in the C or F Funds are eligible to make interfund transfer requests using the Thrift Line, because at that time they signed an "Acknowledgment of Risk" statement (found on both the TSP-1 and TSP-30). Participants who have never invested in the C and F Funds should submit the TSP-30 when they make their first interfund transfer so there is a signed "Acknowledgment of Risk" statement on record. They can then make future interfund transfers by telephone. Remember that interfund transfers affect only money already in a TSP account. To change the allocation of TSP deductions, participants must still submit a TSP-1 to their SPO during an open season. ♦

Arizonians Bring Their Pets to the Rabies Vaccination Clinic

By Tom Brignole, VS, Tempe, AZ

Ten of Arizona's Indian reservations participate in free rabies vaccination clinics each year. The clinics can last from 1 to 10 days, depending on the size of the reservation. A veterinary medical officer (VMO) teams up with an official of the Indian Health Service (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services), employees of the tribal office of Environmental Health, and local community health representatives. Following a schedule of times and places published in advance, the team visits central locations in housing developments and communities where residents bring their dogs and cats for shots. On the Tohono O'odham reservation in southern Arizona, a 10-day clinic resulted in the vaccination of over 1,600 dogs and cats. In the photo, I'm the VMO vaccinating two puppies on the San Carlos Apache reservation near Globe, AZ. Dog bites are a common occurrence on reservations, and because the pets often run free, there is danger that they could contract rabies from surrounding wildlife and pass the disease on to humans. ♦

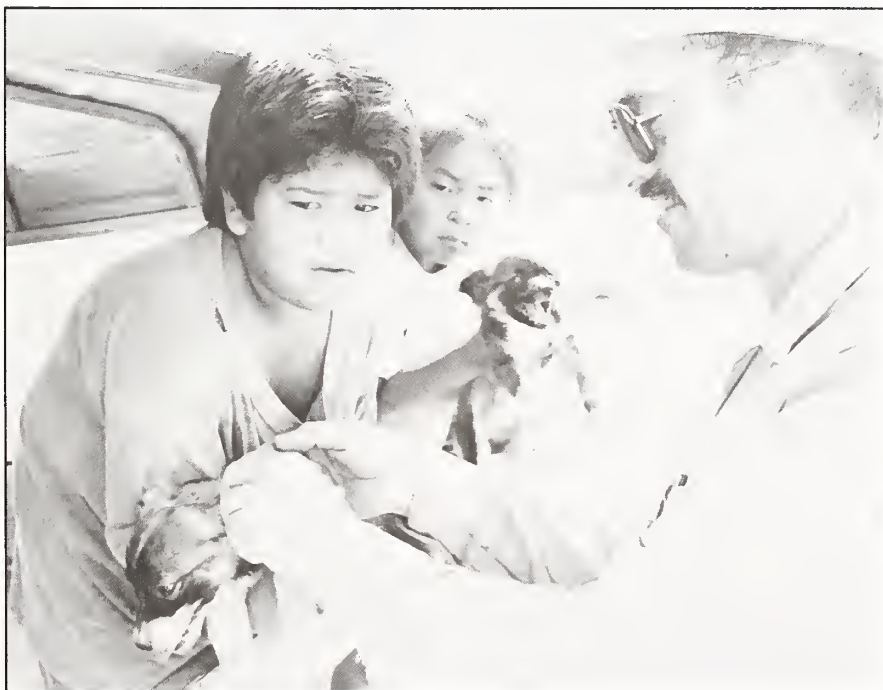


PHOTO COURTESY OF THE APACHE MOCCASIN

Staffs Change Processes With a Quality Improvement Tool

By Denise Barnes, Field Servicing Office, M&B

IS and M&B employees recently slashed in half the time needed for processing international agreements. To go from 993 days to 468 days, the employees used a reinvention tool called quality improvement opportunity (QIO).

QIO is a process that enables work teams to transform expectations of their customers into better services for them. Employees participating in QIO will complete a five-step process (see sidebar).

We begin by assembling a team of people who provide a particular service. These providers analyze what services their customers want, how team members provide these services, and what opportunities exist for providers to interact with customers. The team then makes decisions about improvements that best meet customers' expectations.

Team members' roles are critical to the success of the QIO. Members must challenge current processes, methods, procedures, ideas, and assumptions about the process and identify and implement improvements that will meet or exceed customers' expectations. Members sign a contract for improvement with management sponsors and QIO facilitators, agreeing to work together to improve a process for APHIS customers.

Methods that have sustained results include customer-expectations identification, customer-interaction analysis, process analysis, and analysis of the relationship between the process and interactions to the customer's expectations.

So far, Reinvention Advocates have sponsored two opportunities to improve customer service: a group in Riverdale, MD, wanted to improve the process for international agreements; and a group in Ft. Collins, CO, wanted to improve its trust-fund billing process. I worked for 2 separate weeks with these teams, assisting them through the QIO.

In our first QIO, IS and M&B team members tackled the international-agreements process. Ed Gersabeck, Dana Laster, and Carolyn Corbe volunteered from IS, and Erich Rudyj and Steve Thompson volunteered from M&B's Budget and Accounting Division.

The QIO Process

1. Identify customers' expectations and their levels of satisfaction.
2. Analyze customers' interactions with servers.
3. Chart and analyze the process.
4. Evaluate interactions and the process as they relate to customer expectations.
5. Select improvement projects that have the greatest benefit to the customer.

They analyzed their customers' expectations, customer interactions with providers, and each step of the process. During the week, the Office of General Counsel (OGC), PPQ, PPD and VS also participated.

IS Customer Expectations

The first day, the team learned about quality opportunities, how to take advantage of them, and about how to identify customer expectations. For the primary offering (the agreement), the team identified and ranked four expectations of their customers. They used a scale from 1-5, with 1 being "does not meet expectations," and 5 being "greatly exceeds expectations."

Customer Ranking	Team Ranking	Customer Rating
Legally correct document	2	3.5
Timeliness	1	2.4
Accuracy and completeness	3	3.5
Balance of customers' and providers' tasks	4	3.0

The chart shows that team members understand well their customers' expectations of the agreement. Only "timeliness" and

"legally correct document" exchanged places, and both were near the top.

But, let's look at customers' expectations for delivery of the product:

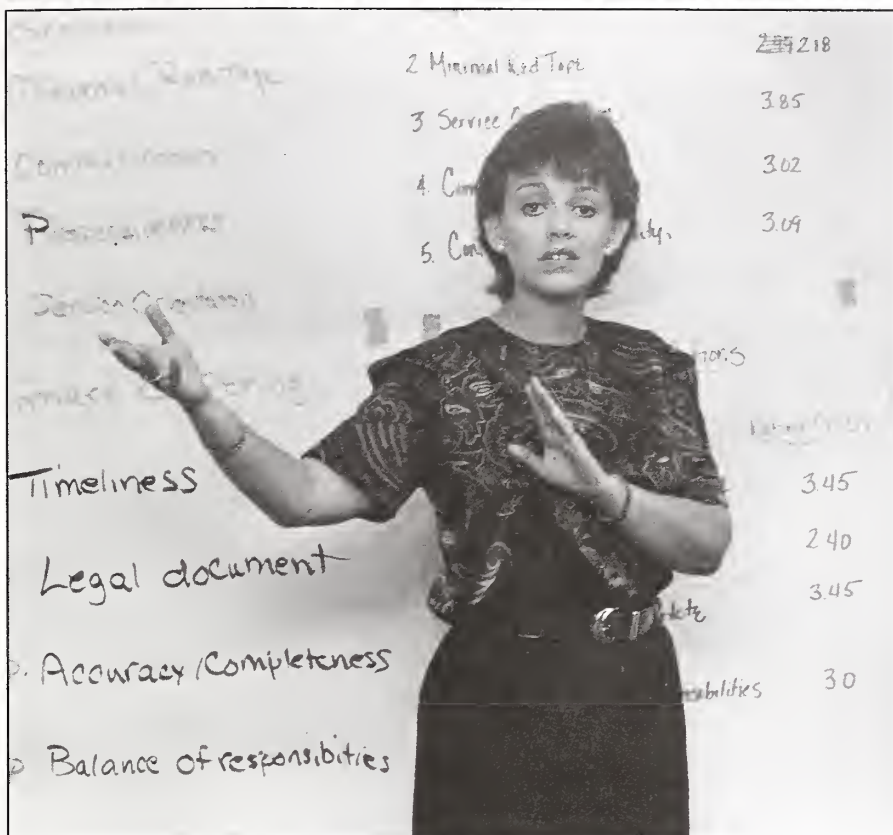
Customer Ranking	Team Ranking	Customer Rating
Responsiveness	4	3.2
Minimal red tape	2	2.2
Service orientation	5	3.9
Communications	3	3.0
Continuity, predictability, consistency	1	3.1

What the customer ranked first, the team ranked last. Sometimes providers think that what the process needs most is what the customer needs most. Responsiveness, minimal red tape, and service are what IS customers expect, along with the actual product (agreement, policy, report, etc.). Customer expectations about "how" you deliver changes from customer to customer and possibly from day to day. Basically, if you have great service and respond to the customer's needs, you'll be on target.

Customer Interactions

The process for people on the international agreements team contains many opportunities for direct interaction with their customers. The only indirect (written) interaction is the agreement itself (reviews and signatures). The top five interactions in the chart are among employees in the Budget and Accounting Division, IS' Resource Management Staff, and the customer. Interactions include planning for the agreement, getting OGC and State Department comments and changes, and obtaining or relaying technical information.

The team felt it was interacting with customers at critical points of the process but could improve on providing status information because the process is lengthy. Very often, the problem is not what providers are doing to interact with customers; it's what they're not doing.



Against a backdrop of the steps of the international agreements process, IS' Dana Laster goes over the steps that customers considered the most important.

Process Analysis

The group's analysis led to an interesting revelation. Members had decided that OGC was the culprit causing the delays in establishing agreements. So we arranged for OGC to be part of the QIO. Meanwhile, team members spent 1-1/2 days charting out each step. When they finished, they had a process that totaled nearly 1,000 days. OGC's part was only 180 days. They stared and glared at the 55-foot process flowchart. Finally, someone observed, "We are throwing stones at OGC when we ourselves are living in a glass house."

The team shared its process with OGC, and OGC helped them put together a flowchart of its internal process. Looking at everything, the team decided that APHIS, the Foreign Agriculture Service (FAS), OGC, and the State Department should all sit down over the next couple of months and develop some business

practices to make international agreements easier and quicker for their customers.

The Possibilities

During a session on possibilities, team members looked at four: (1) establishing a team for agreement services; (2) developing ways of sharing information and benchmarking; (3) finding creative methods of making or extending agreements and using prototype agreements; and (4) getting signature authority at the lowest level.

Upon completion of the QIO for International Agreements, each member understood his or her role in improving the process. For example, Rudyj in BAD made it possible for several agreements to be processed in an extremely short time by eliminating several reviews and initials in the process. In July, Rudyj was awarded the first-ever QIO Implementer Award for moving forward with the implementation of initiatives developed by the team.

In August, the IS-M&B team members presented their findings and ideas to the APHIS Management Team (AMT). The AMT accepted and is supporting the implementation of all four possibilities. An Agreements Service Team is being developed; meetings with OGC and State Department have occurred; and several business improvements have been identified and implemented.

Since the initial workshop this past June, the team has worked with FAS to cut the process even further for cooperative agreements with the United Nations, Danish Pork Producers, and the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation in Agriculture. In collaboration with their FAS counterparts, this team reduced the length and cost of the administrative process to 42 days at a cost of \$1000! They have also established new relationships with APHIS contracting officials and share their international expertise with them.

QIO at Ft. Collins

In September, members of the Field Servicing Office (FSO), the Centers for Epidemiology and Animal Health (CEAH), and VS's Western Regional Office (WRO) used QIO to improve customer satisfaction in their trust-fund accounting and billing process.

The trust-fund process begins with a cooperator making a deposit for APHIS services provided over a period of time and ends with termination of the trust-fund account. A team made up of Debbie Paulson and Elizabeth Groth (FSO), Stayce Tyler, Rene Wing, Nancy Zanetti, and Amy Mitchell (VS-WRO), Sue Coburn (CEAH) and Connie Osmundson (NVSL) analyzed the steps of this process that involved accounting of the trust funds and issuing statements and/or bills.

Customer Expectations

The first step of our analysis was to identify customer expectations and ask customers to rate their satisfaction with APHIS' performance using numbers from 1-5. The customers—cooperators and field officers—gave the following ratings: 1.7 from cooperators and 2.9 from field officers. The team decided to use cooperators as a base line, because their rating was low.

Here are cooperators' expectations, in order of importance to them:

1. Itemized list of expenses
2. Timely refund
3. True accounting of funds
4. Timely statement
5. One monthly statement of charges
6. Service orientation of Federal employees
7. Accurate estimates of amount of deposits

Other feedback was that the providers were doing what they could; the system that they have to work with was the problem.

The three critical interactions with cooperators are receipt of the statement or bill, clarification of charges and balances, and receipt of the final statement. During these interactions, the cooperator is forming opinions about service and how it was provided. Anything we do to improve these areas will directly impact the customer's satisfaction.

Process Analysis

The team identified six stages of the trust fund accounting and billing process:

1. Establish the trust fund;
2. Gather accounting for obligation documentation;
3. Update accounting records;
4. Review & adjust an internal statement;
5. Review & adjust the cooperator's statement; and
6. Close out the trust fund.

The team identified 55 steps needed to accomplish these stages of the process, and noted that 35 of them had failures in some or all of the tasks. In QIO, failures are having to make corrections,

scrapping or adjusting data that do not conform, or steps that do not add value to the process. Examples include creating error reports, interrupting or stopping processes, going outside and then re-entering the process, and repeating a task another way or by another entity.

Many of the failures noted were related to information systems improvements to bring obligation documents together to produce accurate statements/bills. Some steps were simply appraising final statements for discrepancies and reworking them later. The team also acknowledged that so many people and documents were involved that it was sometimes

impossible to avoid having to review data or rework the system.

Action Plan

The Team selected six projects to enhance service and improve customer satisfaction. Champions for each project want to bring fellow trust-fund users from across APHIS together in order to ensure consistency for cooperators (APHIS customers). Many of the improvements will impact the entire APHIS community, so everyone needs to be part of the solution in order to meet customer expectations. Project champions will be contacting people working with trust funds for support. ♦

Project	Champion	Begin	End
Delegate authority to establish trust fund agreements to field offices	Stacye Tyler	9-18-95	1-96
Have field complete obligation accounting before final fund audit	Rene Wing	10-10-95	6-96
Eliminate multiple copies of agreement	Stacye Tyler	10-15-95	10-97
Develop real time information systems	Debby Paulson Stacye Tyler	11-1-95	TBD
Standardize statements and bills	Nancy Zanetti	11-1-95	11-96
Change to a pay-as-you-go system	Stacye Tyler	11-1-95	TBD

IMPROVE from page 10

provided four alternatives for those who wish to communicate electronically:

- GroupWise, Mail ID to IMPROVEM&B
 - Internet, Mail ID to IMPROVEM&B@aphis.usda.gov
 - FTS2000, Mail ID to Internet!IMPROVEM&B@aphis.usda.gov
 - Facsimile, (301) 734-4984
- Lastly, customers may use the

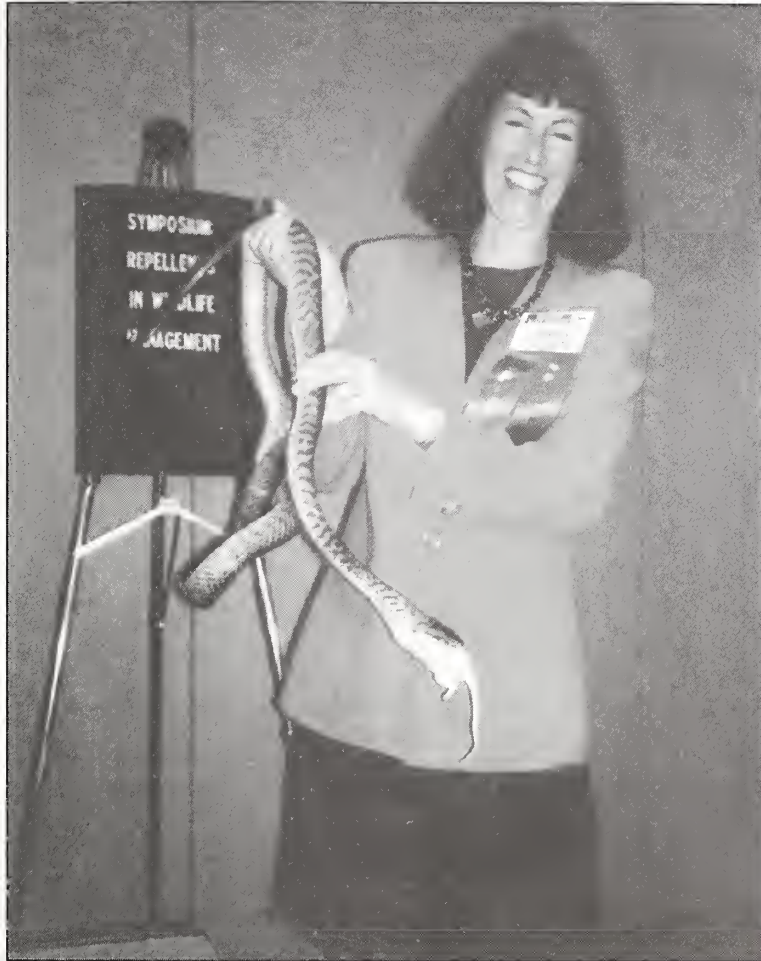
regular mail by addressing their recommendation to:

USDA/APHIS/M&B/Improve
4700 River Road, Unit 17
Riverdale, MD 20737

We in M&B are striving to reach our goals of providing our customers with the best possible service and making the best use of Government resources. We hope that this hotline will provide us with information that will enable us to effect changes needed to reach our

goals. In the coming months I will give updates on the hotline, including the names of employees who have used it, along with their recommendations, and noteworthy results. ♦

Some Guests Just Aren't Polite About Eating in Public



This past August, ADC's Denver Wildlife Research Center sponsored a symposium on repellents in wildlife management. Highlighting the need for effective, economical, and safe repellents to manage wildlife damage problems, the symposium drew 112 participants from 8 countries. Speakers presented numerous case studies on problem animals, including javelinas in urban Texas, Canada geese on golf courses, birds that invade aquaculture facilities, and rodents that feed on grain and nuts. However, none of these caused quite the same sensation as did University of Colorado professor Dave Chizar's talk on the brown tree snake. During his talk, Chizar, from the University of Colorado, produced a live, 5-foot specimen. A brown tree snake can grow up to 10 feet, is arboreal and nocturnal, and has wiped out 9 of the 11 species of native birds on Guam in less than 40 years since its introduction. Here, ADC program chairperson Kathy Fagerstone watches the snake ingest a dead white rat—a reward the snake received for its part in the demonstration. ADC operates a brown tree snake control program on Guam to prevent the snake's inadvertent introduction into Hawaii.

Diana Dwyer, DWRC technical information specialist, and Tim Ohashi, ADC, Hawaii, contributed this information. APHIS photo by David Bird

CEAH Director Gets Kellogg Foundation Fellowship

By Nina Rothenberger, CEAH, VS

VS' Kevin Walker, one of the Centers for Epidemiology and Animal Health's (CEAH) three directors, has received a Kellogg Foundation fellowship for a program to help the nation expand its pool of capable leaders. The foundation announced the grants in September.

The 41 1995 Group XV members were chosen from 521 applicants from educational institutions, academic centers, government, business, industry, and the human services sectors. The program is structured to increase individuals' skills and insights into areas outside their chosen disciplines, allowing them to more creatively and effectively alleviate society's problems.

Walker, who is director for CEAH's Center for Emerging Issues in Ft. Collins, CO, receives a 3-year study grant for a self-designed plan of study. As a fellow, he will attend educational seminars hosted by the Foundation at sites throughout the United States and Latin America.

"The Kellogg National Fellowship Program is challenging because participants pursue an area of study outside their own area of expertise," says Walker. "The philosophy is that you will learn more about your own strengths and weaknesses outside of your comfort zone."

Walker hopes the Kellogg experience will help him be a better leader for CEAH and APHIS. "At the end, I expect to have a

better understanding of social and workforce issues, leadership dynamics and be better prepared to meet future challenges," he says.

Walker has been with APHIS for 7 years and takes pride in CEAH's proactive approach to animal health. He cites the Centers' assessment of the U.S. risk of bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) following the European outbreak in the mid-1980's.

"CEAH's work with BSE helped shape the U.S. response to the disease and enabled officials to make knowledgeable decisions as opposed to reacting to the situation," he says. "The BSE experience showed us that we, APHIS, can be proactive, take the lead, and stay ahead of potential animal health issues." ♦

Position Descriptions Still Document What We Do

By Gretchen Norgren, Human Resources Operations, M&B

In this era of reinvention and virtual organizations, interest in maintaining personnel records seems to be dwindling. Nevertheless, Federal regulations still require that all employees have position descriptions (PD). By law, every civilian employee is entitled to proper compensation for duties performed. The PD serves to document the assignment of duties and their classification.

A PD is not just a paper exercise that satisfies a personnel requirement. It is an official document managers use to make many personnel determinations, including qualifications used in recruitment, selection and/or promotions; full-performance levels of positions; and competitive levels for reduction-in-force purposes.

What's in a PD?

Supervisors and managers are responsible for assigning duties and responsibilities to a position. The PD should capture the important features of the job, so that a

classification specialist can properly evaluate and classify the position. To produce an accurate PD, supervisors and managers should address all the following factors:

- The position's relationship to other positions,
- Its primary purpose or reason for existence,
- The mission and responsibility of the organization in which the position is located, and
- The knowledge required by the position.

Because supervisors play such a vital role in assuring that PD's are accurate, the Office of Personnel Management requires supervisors to sign a statement on the coversheet for all PD's. The statement reads as follows:

"I certify that this is an accurate statement of the major duties and responsibilities of the position and its organizational relationships and that the position is necessary to carry out Government functions for which I am responsible. This certification is made with the

knowledge that this information is to be used for statutory purposes relating to appointment and payment of public funds and that false or misleading statements may constitute violations of such statute or their implementing regulations."

By signing this statement, the supervisor is acknowledging responsibility for ensuring that the duties stated in the PD are the only significant duties the employee is performing on a recurring basis. If this is not the case, the PD is considered inaccurate and could be the grounds for a grievance or appeal.

HRO Can Help

If you are a supervisor faced with the challenge of maintaining accurate PD's, there's help in sight. Human Resources Operations (HRO) classifiers can provide advice and guidance in developing PD's that not only capture changing roles in our new work environment, but also continue to meet regulatory requirements. ♦

International Marketplace

Indonesia—U.S. and Indonesian officials signed a protocol in Jakarta last August for importing U.S. bovine embryos into Indonesia. Najam Faizi of VS' National Center for Import and Export served as chief negotiator on this project, which required 2 years of discussions involving VS, the Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS), and Indonesian veterinary authorities.

PRC—Administrator Lonnie King and the chief of the People's Republic of China's (PRC) Bureau of Animal and Plant Health Quarantines signed four protocols last summer for importing U.S. cattle, swine, bovine embryos, and ostriches into the PRC. VS' Faizi again served as chief negotiator.

Peru—At the end of September, VS employees at the Harry S Truman Animal Import Center released from quarantine an importation of llamas and alpacas from Peru.

Venezuela—APHIS is cooperat-

ing with the Agricultural Research Service's South Atlantic area subtropical research station to import embryos from Romosinuano cattle for research. This will be the first time that embryos from a country infected with foot-and-mouth disease have been imported into the United States. VS' Roger Perkins and Victor Becerra left for Venezuela on October 17 to supervise embryo collection.

Brazil—At a series of negotiations held in August and September, APHIS partially resolved issues related to Brazilian regulation changes and retained valuable export markets of 25 commodities, including apples, pears, grapes, peaches, plums, nectarines, and wheat. Brazil had changed its regulations last March without reporting these changes to the World Trade Organization. APHIS, therefore, did not become aware of these changes until just before the

export season in late July. An APHIS team began negotiations immediately, working through the FAS representative in Brazil and sending IS personnel stationed in Santiago, Chile, to Brazil for negotiations. Chile's Regional Director Jim Mackley and Assistant Regional Director Oswaldo Perez traveled to Chile for talks; Nick Gutierrez of PPQ's Phytosanitary Issues Management team provided information from headquarters and met with a Brazilian plant health official who was in the Washington, DC, area for nonrelated meetings. As a result of these intense negotiations, Brazil agreed to hold its new rules in abeyance until the first of the year; meanwhile, two additional meetings will occur in the United States and Brazil this month. Retaining these markets is worth about \$9 million annually.

(See **MARKETPLACE** on page 18)

Employees Hold an APHIS Day at the Honolulu Airport

PPQ employees at the Honolulu International Airport are rallying to the "one APHIS" standard. At the end of September, they held APHIS Day—a day for APHIS representatives in Hawaii to show the Honolulu International Airport community what APHIS does to fulfil its mission of promoting and protecting U.S. Agriculture.

Co-chaired by senior officers Kenneth Nagata and Clarence Toguchi and coached by manager Susan Kunisaki, the event included representatives and exhibits from PPQ, (the fruit fly rearing facility as well as agricultural quarantine inspection offices) VS, REAC, and ADC.

"We invited the 14,000 employees of the airport community," explains Kunisaki. "These included the airline and cargo industries, vendors, other Federal agencies, and other private industries."

Also invited were Hawaii's Visitors' Bureau, the University of Hawaii's Colleges of Tropical Agriculture and Natural Sciences and its Career Placement Department, high school counselors, Department of Education District officials, the Nature Conservancy, Honolulu Botanical Gardens, Chaminade University's Biology Department, Brigham Young University, Senior Citizens' section



APHIS PHOTO BY RON CHOCK

Hawaii State Plant Health Director Glenn Hinsdale (center) chats with an investigator of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration and a compliance officer with the Food Safety and Inspection Service in front of the PPQ booth.

of Parks and Recreation, the State Department of Agriculture's Quarantine, Marketing, and Public Information Departments, Outdoor Circle of Hawaii, and the City & Country People's Open Market.

"We asked visitors to critique the

exhibits, and the responses were positive," adds Kunisaki. "For next year we are thinking of opening the event to the general public and holding it in the terminal's main lobby." ♦

WAC Encourages Surviving and Thriving in the Workplace

By Gabrielle Canonico, PPD, and Karen Shank, IS

Are you tired of being reinvented? Does the word "change" conjure up images of "rightsizing" and furloughs? Is APHIS not "the way it used to be" anymore? In the words of Bob Dylan, "Times, they are a'changin'."

To support employees through these trying times, the Women's Advisory Committee (WAC) sponsored a series of programs this past September in Riverdale, MD, entitled, "Surviving and Thriving in the Changing Workplace."

As a result of the Visioning and Strategies Conferences earlier this year, APHIS functions (and even our own jobs!) are changing as we speak. This type of organizational change can be very scary, especially for those who are not prepared. But this type of change also

presents us with an opportunity to take advantage of the "newness" of our situation and to learn and grow with the organization. The objective for WAC Week 1995 was to offer APHIS employees—both men and women—some tools for success in the face of change.

The lineup for WAC Week 1995 included professional consultants, employees, the USDA Career Transition Resource Center, and the (now former) Acting Assistant Secretary for Marketing and Regulatory Programs, Pat Jensen. Jensen spoke about the positive and negative effects of change on the individual and why and how we should take advantage of change (as she herself has done).

Speakers and panelists coached us on such topics as self-esteem,

survival strategies for volatile times, mentoring, and self-marketing. Sharon Coursey, Sally McCammon, Linda Story, Charlotte Travieso, and Phyllis York shared their experiences as women in APHIS. Terry Medley spoke to us about how the new APHIS vision and strategies will change our work lives and what we can do to make a difference. Marge Brining, a representative of the USDA Career Transition Center, discussed transitional services available to the USDA workforce, including outplacement and educational opportunities.

"I figure if I learn just one new thing at a program like this, it was time well spent. That's how you move forward—by learning all the time," said a WAC Week attendee. That sums it up! ♦



ADC administrative employees from across the country gathered in Riverdale, MD, during September to attend an ADC Eastern Region administrative meeting. Activities included computer training, strategic planning, and meetings with ADC managers and other APHIS officials. Seated from left are Pat Poteete, Tennessee, and Barbara Ruby, Arkansas. Standing from left are Barbara Smith, Tennessee, Judy Black, Colorado, and Mariette Amundson, Wisconsin.

APHIS photo by Laurie Smith



This past September, ADC brought its future leaders to Riverdale, MD, to participate in a Leadership Excellence Program. During the week, participants worked with mentors, received an assessment of their leadership skills, and drafted learning contracts. The class also joined the ADC Management Team to hear the results of a nationwide public opinion survey on ADC methods. The group's project is to align ADC's strategic plan with the APHIS vision. Participants in the 18-month program include Kevin Bruce, district supervisor for ADC in Mississippi (foreground), Michael Worthen, Western regional director for ADC in Denver, CO, and Kirk Gustad, district supervisor for ADC in Illinois.

APHIS photo by Laurie Smith

MARKETPLACE from page 16

FTAA—IS's Trade Support Team continues to work with FAS in support of a new hemispheric initiative to establish a Free Trade Area for the Americas (FTAA). Seven working groups are now analyzing how the FTAA should be negotiated. Ken Bedat, from IS's Mexico City Office, attended a working group meeting in Mexico in September. APHIS will continue to have representation at these meetings. A background paper on the FTAA (APHIS' standpoint) is available from the Trade Support Team.

Mexico—The North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) held its third sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) meeting in Mexico City this past September to deal with SPS issues. The U.S. delegation was represented by the Office of the

U.S. Trade Representative, FAS, the Environmental Protection Agency, the Food Safety and Inspection Service, the Food and Drug Administration, and APHIS. APHIS representatives were Administrator Lonnie King, VS' Robert Kahrs, PPQ's Nick Gutierrez, and IS' Bonnie King and Peter Fernandez. One of the issues discussed was the exportation of U.S. cherries to Mexico. Mexico surprised the delegation by rejecting the final report from the Expert Cherry Group, which had declared the Western cherry fruit fly of no quarantine significance to Mexico. APHIS continues its efforts to resolve this issue.

Taiwan—APHIS hosted a bilateral meeting in September 1995 in Washington, DC. Repre-

sentatives of the two countries discussed both animal and plant health issues. Specific commodities included Chinese litchi, carambola, orchids, meat and poultry, Pi-Dan eggs; meat inspection requirements and restrictions on brucellosis calfhood-vaccinated cattle; and U.S. apples, potatoes, and grain. The APHIS team was headed by PPQ's Chuck Havens, and VS' Faizi.

Chile—Last August, bilateral discussions with Chile were held in Riverdale, MD. Commodities discussed were Chilean citrus, tomatoes, and grapes; and U.S. apples, pears, stonefruit, citrus, kiwi, avocados, strawberries, and grapes. The APHIS team, headed by PPQ's Chuck Havens and VS' Michael David, hosted the meeting. ♦

Focus on Retirees

By Frank Mulhern, former administrator and AAO facilitator

The APHIS Alumni Organization (AAO) held its 6th and 7th meetings at Riverdale, MD, on the first Wednesday of September and October. Until the AAO agrees on bylaws, anyone who has worked for APHIS is considered a member of this group and is welcome to attend monthly meetings.

Sharon Coursey, the APHIS Management Team's representative on the AAO, gave alumni an update on the APHIS change agenda and strategies. To promote "one APHIS," the agency is holding meetings here in Washington, DC, and in other parts of the country to orient APHIS members to the change agenda and to engage them in implementation activities.

AAO Mission

At the September meeting, M&B's Lamont Turner volunteered to help us write a mission statement. We asked all alumni to send suggestions for critical elements of the mission statement to Turner (fax 301-734-4999, telephone (301) 734-4884) or to contact the APHIS office in their State and ask them to send the statements to Turner. Turner reviewed all input and developed a draft mission statement, which he distributed at the October meeting. Copies of this draft are being sent to those who participated by conference call. We heard those who cautioned us not to get too bureaucratic! Hopefully, we will have a final statement at our next meeting.

Contacting AAO Members

At this stage of the AAO's development, we are relying on our page in *Inside APHIS* to communicate with our members. More of our members are now getting the newsletter, but we still have a long way to go. We have been working internally to resolve complaints about nonreceipt of the newsletter. If you know alumni who are not getting *Inside APHIS*, ask them to contact the APHIS office in their State and request to have their name and address forwarded to

the appropriate person or write the editor (see page 2 for address) requesting to be added to the mailing list.

International trade is an area where alumni could use their expertise as consultants. One proposal under consideration by AAO is developing a list of alumni consultants and asking APHIS to certify the qualifications of those on the list.

Did you hear or read about the criticism of APHIS enforcement of the Animal Welfare Act in the September 11 issue of the *U.S. News & World Report*? Could AAO play a role in diffusing this kind of criticism?

Regional Model

PPQ Northeastern Regional Director Chuck Schwalbe attended the meetings via conference call and stressed the following:

- APHIS leaders are sincere in their desire to have continual contacts with all employees both past and present.
- APHIS recognizes the sizeable loss of talent from recent retirements.
- The agency could be using alumni on emergencies, for training, and as consultants.
- He plans to make his region a model for working with alumni. He will have alumni in his region participate in our November meeting via conference call.
- The AAO can help keep track of alumni moves and keep the agency from losing contact with them.
- Alumni can play a leading role in improving the APHIS archives.

Georgia Alumni Meet

I appreciate those who have participated in our monthly meetings. We are gradually focusing on the key points that we need to pursue. We not only need to know who has an interest in establishing an AAO, but we need volunteers to enlarge member participation. If you are interested, let us hear from you. We need to hear from any groups of alumni

that are meeting, regardless of how large or small a group it is. We will pass along information on this page. For example, in the Southeast, alumni there had their annual meeting on November 3 in Dublin, GA. We look forward to getting their ideas about our proposed AAO. ♦

Alumni Survey

We are developing a directory of retirees and are seeking alternatives for communicating with you. To share this information, we need your permission, so please complete the following:

Here is my information:

Name _____

Street _____

City _____

State _____

Zip _____

Optional information:

Telephone _____

Fax _____

E-mail address _____

Please include the above information in your directory:

Yes No

Clip and return this form to Terry Hall, APHIS, PPD, room 0099 South Building, 14th and Independence Ave., Washington, DC 20250. Give this form to any former APHIS employee who may not receive this newsletter.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
ANIMAL AND PLANT HEALTH INSPECTION SERVICE

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